



## THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF COTE D'IVOIRE

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Cote d'Ivoire operates on a 6-4-3 system:	Primary School	--	6 years
	Junior Secondary School	--	4 years
	Senior Secondary School	--	3 years (= Bac)
At university level:	University DEUG degree	---	2 years after the Bac
	University Licence degree	--	3 years after the Bac
	University Maitrise degree	--	4 years after the Bac

**Language:** French is the sole language of instruction throughout the country. English is taught at the secondary school level and is compulsory from sixth grade onwards.

### Structure and Educational System:

**Primary school** (*ecole primaire*) begins at age 6 and lasts 6 years, and students are awarded a *Certificat d'Etudes Primaires Elémentaires CEPE* (Certificate of Primary Elementary Studies) upon completion. The first cycle of secondary school (*Collège d'Enseignement Général*) is 4 years and, upon successful completion, students are awarded a *Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle/BEPC* (Certificate of First Cycle Studies). First cycle technical studies are offered at *Centres de Formation Professionnelle* (Professional Training Centers). They are 4 years and students are also awarded a *Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle/BEPC*.

**Second cycle secondary** studies are 3 years and are offered at *lycées*. Upon completion of the 3 years of study, students sit for the *Baccalauréat* (Baccalaureate) or *Diplôme de Bachelier de l'Enseignement du Second Degré* (Diploma of Baccalaureate of Second Degree Study) examination. Technical second cycle secondary studies are offered at *lycées techniques* and *lycées professionnels*. Upon completion of the 3 years of study, students sit for the *Baccalauréat Technique* (Technical Baccalaureate) examination or the *brevet de technicien*, BT (higher technician certificate).

Throughout the school system, all final exams are standardized and produced by the government for both government and private schools.

In the last few years, overall pass rates on the Bac varied from 15-30 % on average depending on the field of study; students majoring in math, biology, physics enjoying relatively higher rates than those in literature, for instance.

University studies are offered at 3 public universities, several private universities, university centers and other institutions. In 1996, the Université Nationale de Côte d'Ivoire was divided into three universities: Université de Cocody, the Université d'Abobo-Adjamé, and the Université de Bouaké. Admission requires a *baccalauréat* or a *baccalauréat technique*. The first cycle of university studies (*premier cycle*) is 2-4 years, depending on the program of study. After 2 years of study, students are awarded a *Diplôme Universitaire d'Etudes Générales/DEUG* (Diploma of General University Studies). *Instituts universitaires de technologie/IUT* (university institutes of technologies) offer 3-year programs and students are awarded a *Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie* (University Technological Diploma) upon successful completion of studies.

The cost of higher education is high at private universities and relatively low at public universities. Many students receive scholarship grants from government institutions, and these can cover almost all expenses for attending a public university but public institutions have become too small to receive all the students graduating from high schools.

Second cycle university studies (*deuxième cycle*) require a *DEUG*. A *licence* is 1 year following a *DEUG*, and a *maîtrise* is 1 year following a *licence*. A reform of the entire university system is supposed to be phased in in about 2 years, paralleling the Bologna

reforms going on in Europe. This reform, also known as licence-master-doctorat (L-M-D), is allegedly modeled after the American bachelor-master-doctorate degree system.

Third cycle university studies (*troisième cycle*) include the *Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures Spécialisées/DESS* (Diploma of Higher Specialized Studies) and the *Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies/DEA* (Diploma of Advanced Studies) which are both 1-year programs following a *maîtrise*. Doctoral studies are 3 years following a *DESS* or a *DEA* and students are awarded a *doctorat* following successful defense of a dissertation.

Professional programs also require the *baccalauréat* for admission. Dentistry and pharmacy programs are 5 years, and students are awarded a *Doctorate en Chirurgie Dentaire* (Doctor of Dental Surgery) or a *Doctorate en Pharmacie*. Medicine is 7 years and students are awarded *Doctorate en Médecine*. Prospective students in pharmacy, medicine or dentistry go through a 2-year pre med-pharm-dent program also known as “tronc commun”. Engineering is 5 years and students are awarded a *Diplôme de Ingénieur de conception* upon successful completion of the program. This degree is not to be confused with the Diplôme d’Ingenieur des Techniques obtained after 4 years. A *Docteur-Ingénieur* is awarded after 3 years of study following a *Diplôme de Ingénieur de conception* program and successful defense of a dissertation.

Teacher training programs are offered at *centres d'animation et de formation pédagogique/ CAFOP* (pedagogic training and animation centers) and require a *baccalauréat* for admission. Primary school teacher training programs are 3 years. Lower cycle secondary teacher programs are 3 years and students are awarded a *Certificat d'Aptitude Pédagogique pour l'Enseignement du Premier Cycle (collèges modernes)/CAPCM* (Certificate of Pedagogic Aptitude for First Cycle Teaching [modern lower secondary schools]). Upper secondary school teachers must hold a *licence d'enseignement* (teaching licenciante) or, if they hold a licence in other fields they can complete a 1-year teacher training program followed by 1 year of student teacher to earn the *Certificat d'Aptitude Pédagogique pour l'Enseignement du Second Degré/CAPES* (Certificate of Pedagogic Aptitude for Upper Secondary Teaching).

Technical secondary school teachers are trained at *instituts pédagogique national de l'enseignement technique et professionnel* (national technical and vocational teacher training institutes). The programs of study are 2-5 years, depending on the level of instruction. 2-year programs award the title of *Instructeur de Formation Professionnelle* (Vocational Training Teacher). 3-year programs award the title of *Professeur de Centre de Formation Professionnelle* (Vocational Training Center Teacher), 4-year programs award the title of *Professeur de Lycée Professionnel* (Professional Lycée Teacher), and 5-year programs offer the title of *Professeur Certifié de l'Enseignement Technique et de la Formation Professionnelle* (Technical Instruction and Vocational Training Certified Teacher).

#### **GRADING SCALES: All levels of education**

<u>Numeric</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Translation</u>	<u>Suggested U.S. Equivalent</u>	<u>Comments</u>
16-20	Très Bien	Very Good	A +	It is rare to score above 15 at the Bac
14-15	Bien	Very Good	A	
12-13	Assez Bien	Good	B	
10-11	Passable	Passing	C	
0-9	Ajourné	Fail	F	

**Ivoriens in the United States:** 711 students from Cote d’Ivoire are enrolled in U.S. institutions. (2008 *Open Doors*)

**Testing:** There are 3 official TOEFL centers and one for SAT, GMAT / GRE all based in Abidjan and surroundings. TOEFL appears to be the most popular of all US Tests, most students seeing it as the main key to getting admission. There are only a couple of SAT preparation centers in Abidjan and none up country. SAT is still not very well known and parents who can afford it seem to prefer US based intensive English programs to local SAT preparation. Local TOEFL, SAT, GRE, GMAT preparation centers are perceived as being too expensive and not very effective.

**Educational Advising:** The Educational Advising Center is located in the Public Affairs Section of the United States Embassy. We provide accurate information about U.S. educational, requirements, policies and procedures and with the help of a wide range of programs help strengthen students’ applications and their readiness for U.S. higher education.

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